

# IN THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY BY CLARA MORRIS

AS one may sit and flutter over the leaves of a well-known book, so I sit and flutter over my mental portraits of those who have honored me and lighted dreary in four days by their too brief presence in my dressing room. Here is the laughing face of Mme. Jane Hading; here the stern dignity of Mme. Janaschek; here a Senator—there a future President—and alas, martyr! Ah, a general, handsome, laughing like a boy; the sun-browned, keen-eyed De Lesseps; Modjeska, grande dame to her finger tips; Walter Paris, England's magician in water colors.

I smile as a farmer might, gazing at over-filled barn and crib with golden grain gleaming at every crevice. As the leaves flutter faster, Bernhardt, the mighty; Neilson, the most beautiful; Carlotta Patti, splendidly worthy of her name—flash up and disappear.

Sothern, whose hair turned gray under the strain of his international practical jokes; Mrs. Madge Kendall, the British Matron—with two capitals. Glimpses of bright eyes, laughing lips; of feathers, furs, velvets, evening dress, carriage dress, traveling dress—why, what was that? A wearer of the Roman collar? That must be a mistake. I turn back the picture and look steadily at the kindly face, the smiling eyes, and suddenly I place him and his companion, who seems but an accompanying shadow, to my shame be it said, as I recall their visit to my dressing room at Marysville, Cal.

We had been playing "Miss Moulton" that evening and had not advanced far in the play before we were aware of the presence of an enthusiast in the stage box. That he was modest was made evident by his lowering of the light and the placing of chairs as nearly as possible within the shadow of the box curtains. We could see two gentlemen seated there, who gave the almost strained attention to every word that a foreigner is apt to show in following a play in a strange tongue, but while one was content with that wrapt attention, the other, who might, from his movements, have had quicksilver in his blood, seemed to feel an absolute necessity for expression. When he laughed at the children's dance all the audience turned amused eyes upon the box, from whence such gusts of merriment blew and where two hands could be seen gleefully smiting a pair of knees. We soon noted the lightning quickness of the perception of delicate points, often missed by the general public, and some of my people thought we had an actor in our box. As he grew more and more interested, he leaned forward and into the light, and tears literally streamed over his cheeks as the helpless, disgusted mother sat there tortured by those innocent little inquisitors, her own children. Once, when forgetting the servant in the mother, without speaking I put forth my hand to stroke my little one's hair, but swiftly checked the movement and dropped my hand heavily—instant applause came from the box. Independently in different to other judgment, he approved whenever he saw fit, and presently he had a really cold house as warmly generous as himself. I was the first to recognize the priestly garb and to pass the surprising discovery on. There was nothing so very unusual in the presence of a wearer of the cloth in a theater of repute. It was the keen discernment, the enthusiasm for things dramatic that touched us.

When the play was over I hurried to my room, and was just lifting my hands to unpin my heavy wig of gray when I heard the voice of my manager saying: "Mme. Clara, if you are not too tired, here are a couple of gentlemen who would be glad of a word or two with you."

Even through the closed door I noted a new tone of respectful restraint in the usually boisterous voice. With a petulant gesture I opened the door to—a stalwart father and a slender young seminarian, and recognized our enthusiastic of the box. Giving my guests respectful greeting and hearty welcome, I was startled by the exclamation:

"Ah, what a play and what a player! Such a beautiful bit of 'business' you have introduced in the death scene since I saw you last!"

"Good gracious!" I cried, "you are quite outrageously technical, Father X; you are speaking like an actor—new 'business,' indeed!"

"Ah!" he laughed, "that comes of my happy association with that lovely woman and pure soul, Mary Anderson."

"You are then acquainted with

Miss Anderson?" I asked, a bit surprised, I imagine.

"Better than acquainted," he smiled.

And remembering suddenly, I exclaimed, "Oh, to be sure; she is within the fold of your great church."

He bowed acquiescence. "A worthy and devoted daughter of the faith, and also a most valued friend!"—and straightway he related how she sacrificed personal comfort in the scrupulous performance of her religious duties—how she did gentle deeds all secretly.

"But," I interrupted, "you are carrying coals, bright, clean, valuable coals though they be, to Newcastle when you tell me of the wholesome life, faith and kindly deeds of this gifted young actress."

"Then you believe her gifted?" he asked.

"Assuredly!" I answered.

"You think she has already done her best?"

"Far from it. You must wait a bit. She will ripen slowly, I think, but very beautifully. You know, Father, Shakespearean women are many-sided—deep as the sea—shallow as a brook. You cannot expect a young and happily inexperienced girl to comprehend them thoroughly. In a year or two, or three—best give her time for observation, as well as study, and for imagination."

"She is so beautiful!" he murmured; (I nodded)—"she has such a noble voice, and yet the critics cry out against her for coldness. They say it mars her work!"

"She is young in art, even as she is young in life," I said, excusingly. For truly at that time the most



ardent love speech, having passed the pink lips of Mary Anderson, became an arabesque of frost upon a window pane—very beautiful, very delicate and very cold.

"Will she ever change?" he asked, uneasily. "Will her heart quicken into warmth?"

"She is a woman," I answered.

"But her study, her hard work, her duty to that large family, her am-

"As he grew more and more interested, he leaned forward, into the light."

bition—they fill her life so full; to change—that would be a miracle."

"She is a woman," I repeated, "and miracles happen to them only."

He laughed as gayly as a lad. Then he sat a long moment, his eyes fixed upon the floor.

"She thinks that she will change," he murmured.

Impatiently, I exclaimed: "She must, I tell you! She will wake up

some day—her heart will warm, her blood will quicken, the scales will fall from her eyes. Then she will see new meanings in her lines; have new and tender tones to speak them with."

"And the result?" he interrupted. "Will be a tremendous increase of power over her public."

His face was bright as new silver. He lifted his index finger: "Listen,"

he said. "The spirit of prophecy is upon me—"

Laughter quivered at the corner of his lips. Irreverently, I commented: "You don't look it, sir."

He wagged his finger threateningly: "Madam, you show lack of respect for my superior years."

"About two of them, are there not—or are we of the same age, father?"

He wagged me down: "The dis-

respectful earn punishment, and—"

"Oh, Father X," I broke in, "do you remember Barney Williams' famous line?"

"I do," he laughed, and without pause and in a brogue thick enough to cut with a knife, he quoted: "Ah—ah! You're wurkin for what you'll soon get, an' that's a dash good lickin', do yer mind!"

It was so beautifully done that I laughed with delight, then laughed again at the stricken face of his student friend, when he heard that noble brogue—but the finger resumed its wagging: "You believe that a great change will one day come to my friend, and I was about to prophesy what the actual result of such change would be, but for your punishment, irreverent one, you must now guess it for yourself."

"Good gracious!" I cried, "but I don't know you, father—neither your tastes, preferences nor mode of thought!"

"Therein lies the punishment of your guessing," he blandly remarked. "Pray, go on, my daughter, get to your task."

Truly the man loved his joke, and never have I turned coldly from one, so I accepted the situation, and notorious guesser that I am, I obeyed orders and got to my guessing. I had declared the result of a change of temperament would be augmented power over the public. Evidently, he thought differently. I knit my brows in silent thought.

"Good!" chuckled this priestly tease. "See the actress guessing the churchman's thought."

Seeing no light ahead, I tried to change my point of view; tried to put myself in his place and think of the matter from the standpoint of the church adviser and affectionate friend. I met his eyes by chance and unintentionally stared steadily into them, and began slowly to argue to myself: "This coldness the critics so decry is a heaven-sent protection to the purity of a young soul. It is a sort of transparent, magic armor. If it melts away she will stand tenderly sensitive to a thousand hurts, unfeeling before, and—she—"

My fixed gaze broke—I gave a laugh of triumph! "I have guessed your prophecy!" I cried.

"Let me hear it!" he demanded. "You were going to say that when this miracle comes to pass; when this lovely statue comes to life; when she discovers the secret of her own softening heart, she will simply share that secret with one only person in all the world, and the public will profit none at all."

He looked profoundly surprised for a moment; then said: "Well, you have done it! But—er—er—aren't you a bit of a mesmerist?"

And when I laughingly answered, "Good heavens, no!" he went on: "Well, you'd not be above believing the Banshee, if you were Irish—for you've a touch of the uncanny, anyhow—"

Then with grave courtesy the good father asked pardon for so prolonging his intended brief call, and as he stood receiving assurances of my respect and gratitude for his kindness, he offered me with gentle dignity the blessing he was empowered to bestow.

Earnestly, I said: "Most gratefully will I accept your blessing, father, after you are informed that, technically, I am not of your church." He looked surprised. "We both follow and love the same dear Shepherd, but we do not rest in the same fold—I am not a Catholic; do you wish to withdraw your offered benison?"

He looked silent reproach at me and raised his hand, while with bowed head I gratefully and respectfully received the blessing he pronounced with a gentle fervor.

In that moment he was changed. Frolic and laughter had fallen from him, and in perfect dignity he stood in that strange combination of authority and obedience, of student, teacher, and orator; in whom the aloofness of the cellmate was softened by the benevolence of a spiritual fatherhood, and all bound together with that gracious snavity that plainly spells priest of the Roman Catholic Church. He took my hand in a hearty grasp. No, he could not accept my hospitality, as he had to catch a train and return to safekeeping his young seminarian. We exchanged a few last, rather lingering words of farewell, and then I stepped out with them to see them safely through the supposedly dark passageway, and lo! there was the great, empty auditorium, still ablaze with light, and so it came about that this unconventional father departed in a blaze of light and a gale of ringing, boyish laughter.

## HEARTS AND MASKS, By Harold MacGrath, Author of "THE MAN ON THE BOX."

(Continued from Eighth Page.)

"Fifty cents; it has never been worn."

I drew out my wallet. I had arrived in town too late to go to the bank, and I was carrying an uncomfortably large sum in gold-bills. As I opened the wallet to extract a small bill, I saw the stranger eyeing me quietly. Well, well, the dullest being brightens at the sight of money and its representation. I drew out a small bill and handed it to the proprietor. He took it, together with the mask, and sidled over to the cash-register. The bell gave forth a muffled sound not unlike that of a fire-bell in a storm. As he was in the act of wrapping up my purchase, I observed the silent customer's approach. When he reached my side he stooped and picked up something from the floor. With a bow he presented it to me.

"I saw it drop from your pocket," he said; and then when he saw what it was, his jaw fell, and he sent me a hot, penetrating glance.

"The ten of hearts!" he exclaimed in amazement.

I laughed easily. "The ten of hearts?" he repeated.

"Yes, four hearts on one side and four on the other, and two in the middle, which make ten in all."—"rallying in my tones. What the deuce was the matter with everybody tonight? 'Marvelous card, isn't it?'"

"Very strange!" he murmured, pulling at his lips.

"And in what way is it strange?" I asked, rather curious to learn the cause of his agitation.

"There are several reasons,"—briefly.

"Ah!"

"I have seen a man's hand pinned to that card; therefore it is gruesome."

"Some card-sharper?"

"He nodded." "Well, again, I lost a small fortune because of that card!"—diffidently.

"Poker?"

"Yes. Why will a man try to fill a royal flush? The man next to me drew the ten of hearts, the very card I needed. The sight of it always unnerves me. I beg your pardon."

"Oh, that's all right," said I, wondering how many more lies he had up his sleeve.

"And there's still another reason. I saw a man put six bullets into the two central spots, and an hour later the seventh bullet snuffed the candle of a friend of mine. I am from the West."

"I can sympathize with you," I returned. "After all that trouble the sight of the card must have given you a shock."

Then I stowed away the fatal card and took up my bundle and change. I have in my own time tried to fill royal flushes, and the disappointment still lingers with a bitter taste.

"The element of chance is the most fascinating thing there is," the stranger from the West volunteered.

"So it is," I replied, suddenly recalling that I was soon to put my trust in the hands of that very fickle goddess.

He nodded and returned to his revolver, while I went out of the shop, hailed a cab, and drove uptown to my apartments in Riverside. It was 8 o'clock by my watch. I leaned back against the cushions, ruminating. There seemed to be something going on that night; the ten of hearts was acquiring a mystifying, not to say sinister, aspect. First it had alarmed the girl in Mouquin's, and now this stranger in the curio-shop. I was confident that the latter had lied in regard to his explanation. The card had startled him, but his reasons were altogether of transparent thinness. A man never likes to confess that he is unlucky at cards; there is a certain pride in lying about the enormous stakes you have won and the wonderful draws you have made. I frowned. It was not possible for me to figure out what his interest in the card was. If he was a Westerner, his buying a

pistol in a pawnshop was at once robbed of its mystery; but the inconsistent elegance of his evening clothes doubled my suspicion. What was the use of troubling myself with this stranger's affairs? He would never cross my path again.

In reasonable time the cab drew up in front of my apartments. I dressed, donned by Capuchin's robe and took a look at myself in the pier-glass. Then I unwrapped the package and put on the mask. The whole made a capital outfit, and I was vastly pleased with myself. This was going to be such an adventure as one reads about in the ancient numbers of Blackwood's.

I slipped the robe and mask into my suitcase and lighted my pipe. During great moments like this, a man gathers courage and confidence from a pipeful of tobacco. I dropped into a comfortable posture, touched the gas-log, and fell into a pleasant dream. It was not necessary for me to start for the Twenty-third street ferry till nine; so I had three-quarters of an hour to idle away.

What beautiful hair that girl had! It was like sunshine, the silk of corn, the yield of the harvest. And the marvelous abundance of it! It was true that she was an artist's model; it was equally true that she had committed a mild impropriety in addressing me as she had; but, for all I could see, she was a girl of delicate breeding, doubtless one of the many whose art, fortunes, or misfortunes, forced them to earn a living. And it is no disgrace these days to pose as an artist's model. The classic oils, nowadays, call only for exquisite creations in grown-up mythology was exhausted by the old masters. Rome, Paris, London; possibly a bohemian existence in these cities accounted for her ease in striking up a conversation, harmless enough, with a total stranger. In Paris and Rome it was all very well; but it is a risky thing to do in unromantic New York and London. However, her uncle had been with her; a veritable fortress, had I overstepped the bounds of politeness. The smoke wavered and rolled about me. I took out the ten of hearts, and studied it astutely.

After all, should I go? Would it be wise? I confess I saw goblins' heads peering from the spots and old Poe stories returned to me. Pshaw! It was only a frolic, no serious harm could possibly come of it. I would certainly go, now I had gone this far. What fool idea the girl was bent on.

I stared at the bit of pasteboard, flattered. How the deuce had this got into my apartments? A Blue Domino! Ha! I had it! Old Friar had accidentally done up the ticket with my mask. A Blue Domino; evidently I wasn't the only person who was going to a masquerade. Without doubt this fair devil was about to join the festivities of some shop-girl's masquerade, where money and peddlars are in consequent things, and where everybody is either a "foidy" or a "gent."

Persons who went to my kind of masquerade did not rent their costumes; they lent them. I had been told that a fashionable modiste and tailor, and had them made to order. A Blue Domino; humph!

It was too late to take the ticket back to Friar's; so I determined to mail it to him in the morning.

It was now high time for me to be off. I got into my coat and took down my opera hat. Outside the storm was still active; but the snow had a promising softness, and there were patches of stars to be seen here and there in the sky. By midnight there would be a full moon. I got to Jersey City with a full moon, and I took my seat in the smoker. I found I had ten minutes to spare. I bought a newspaper and settled down to read the day's news. It was fully half an hour before Jersey City and Blankshire; in that time I could begin and finish the paper.

Name.....Hawthorne  
Costume.....Blue Domino  
Time.....8:30 P. M.  
Returned.....  
Address.....West 5th Street  
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affliction she was unable to exert herself in keeping the house clean. As a result the place had not been properly aired or swept in months. The bedding was nothing more than a bundle of filthy rags, while the boy slept upon the floor on a discarded mattress which was so blackened by age and use that its original color could not be determined.

**Slept in Empty Barrels.**

Rodents, spiders, and vermin of every description seemed to have congregated there as though it were the great breeding place for the city. There were some furniture in the room, but this was piled one piece on top of the other until it became a useless, tottering pile which served only as a nesting place for all the unwelcome occupants of the room.

Under such truly nauseating conditions it is marvelous that the boy preferred to remain on the streets and in empty barrels at night rather than go home. Had there been no board of guardians the boy's excuse before an ordinary court would not have passed muster and he would probably have been sentenced for vagrancy according to the legal regulations.

It was through the board that the house was made sanitary and that the boy secured a position where he is rapidly

working his way up, and besides earning a comfortable livelihood is making a good citizen. Had the board done nothing but carried on its work in such a case as this single instance it would have fully established its usefulness as an important, nay, a necessary adjunct of the city government.

There have been many other cases of similar character which have been before the juvenile branch of the Police Court. Recently a child of ten was brought up because, like Jean Valjean in Victor Hugo's "Les Misérables," he stole a loaf of bread when he was almost famished.

There was a large family and the father had been ill for a number of weeks with rheumatism. The mother of the household was at work in the city during the day and the children were left almost starving at times. This child took the bread and returned home, where he was found sitting with his back against the wall greedily devouring his ill-gotten (?) food. Under such circumstances there was, of course, no action taken against the child.

On another occasion a boy was arrested while sleeping in a bread box. He stated that he had remained out after 12 o'clock, and that he did not go home because his father always locked all the doors when he remained out later than 12. An effort was made to im-

press upon the parent that it was such treatment as his which caused the criminality of the future.

**Stole Money for Theater Tickets.**

It was only a day or two ago that two boys of tender age were arrested for breaking into a store and robbing a money drawer of \$7. When caught and questioned about the matter they stated that they had stolen the money in order that they might buy theater tickets. These young offenders were sent to the reformatory.

Probation Officer Copp stated that the number who have once served probation and who are brought before the court for a second time is exceedingly small, a fact which argues well for the preventive efficacy of the system now in vogue.

The regular juvenile court, which it is hoped will soon be in operation, is a continuance of the same kind of work which is now carried on by the Board of Children's Guardians, with the advantage that it is a broadening of the principles and the scope of the labors in this direction, guaranteeing greater thoroughness in seeking out the causes which underlie the beginning of criminal careers. It is believed that many salutary measures will eventually be introduced which will do away to a large extent with such deplorable cases as have here been set forth.

## HOW WASHINGTON DEALS WITH CHILD CRIMINALS

(Continued from Sixth Page.)

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